REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated April 10, 2003. Claims 1-3 and 7 are presently being examined. Claims 4-6 and 8, have been previously cancelled as being directed to a non-elected invention, without prejudice to their being presented in a divisional application. Claims 1 and 7 are the remaining independent claims. Favorable review is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Miller (U.S. Pat. No. 6,101,481) in view of Rassman et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 4,937,743). The applicants respectfully submit that amended independent claims 1 and 7 are patentable over the art cited by the Examiner, for the following reasons.

The present invention, as defined in claim 1, is directed to a method in which each user of an automated system for transacting business, is assigned an identifier, and a security profile is prepared corresponding to each identifier; the security profiles includes a set of authorized transactions. Note that the users of the system are subject to predetermined rules governing business conduct. The method also includes the steps of preparing a list of pairs of incompatible transactions if performed by the same user, in accordance with predetermined (business conduct) rules; comparing each security profile with the list; and generating a report indicating those security profiles including incompatible transactions.

Similarly, claim 7 is directed to a computer-readable medium having stored therein instructions for performing a method including retrieving a security profile and a list of pairs of incompatible transactions if performed by the same user. Each security profile is compared with the list and a report is generated, as in the method of claim 1.

It is thus a feature of the present invention that (1) there are predetermined rules governing business conduct; (2) a list is prepared, in accordance with those rules, of pairs of incompatible transactions if performed by the same user; and (3) user security profiles which include incompatible transactions are identified and reported. Applicants note that incompatible transactions are defined in the detailed description of the present application as transactions which, if performed by the same user, would permit misuse of the system or fraud (page 6, lines 15-16).

Miller is understood to disclose a task management system for tasks of a project (e.g. a Gantt chart, as in col. 7, line 36 and FIG. 1) in which a task controller is identified as responsible for a given task, and details of the task are shared between two or more people. However, according to Miller, only those people who are directly involved in a task should see the details of that task (col. 11, lines 65-67). Those not involved in a given task would be "locked out"--not permitted to see the details of a task (col. 12, lines 3-9). Miller's concern for "security" evidently involves unauthorized viewing of a task's details by other users of the system. It should be noted that Miller does not address the problem of identifying incompatible tasks performed by a user, which, if performed by the same user, would permit misuse of the system or fraud. As understood, Miller teaches a process implemented in accordance with a specific list of four "core business rules." However, these four rules taught by Miller merely relate to how task detail is controlled and viewed by persons participating in a task (col. 7, line 57 through col. 8, line 10), not how business should be conducted. Miller makes no suggestion that the performance of certain separate transactions could be incompatible with rules governing business conduct, as in the present invention. Miller does not envision a system in which a given user should not be permitted to perform certain tasks in view of such business conduct rules.

Accordingly, the above-described features of the present invention are neither taught nor suggested by Miller, so that the present invention would not have been obvious from that reference.

Rassman et al. is understood to disclose a resource management system in which a database is provided having information about the resources, and availability of the resources is monitored and displayed as a function of time. Rassman et al. suggests (col. 3, lines 2-21) that the system may be used to automatically adjust schedules in the event of scheduling conflicts. Rassman et al. does not teach or suggest that tasks or transactions may be conflicting or incompatible because of rules governing business conduct. In particular, Rassman et al. does not suggest that a user of the system might have a security profile including a set of authorized transactions, or identifying security profiles of a user that have incompatible transactions (i.e. incompatible with the rules governing business conduct) if performed by the same user.

Accordingly, Rassman et al. does not teach or suggest the above-noted features of the present invention.

Miller and Rassman et al., individually or in combination, fail to teach or suggest preparing a list of incompatible transactions if performed by the same user, in accordance with predetermined rules governing business conduct, as in the present invention. Accordingly, the present invention would not have been obvious from either of the cited references, or from a combination thereof.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the applicants respectfully request favorable consideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

The applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached by telephone at (845) 894-6919. All correspondence should continue to be directed to the below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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